



## Is a Cancer Support Group right for me?

It's important to remember that a Cancer Support Group is one option for getting the help you need.

Cancer Council WA Cancer Support Groups have a group facilitator who will have a chat with you about your needs and will discuss whether the group can help you. The facilitator may recommend you attend the group or they might refer you to a more suitable support option.



## Not all Cancer Support Groups have the same qualities

Cancer Council WA Cancer Support Groups offer:

- confidentiality
- privacy
- trained facilitators
- opportunities for referrals on to other services
- opportunities to share experiences
- pre-group interviews

Other groups you might hear about in the community include social groups or self-help groups. These groups may not have trained facilitators and may meet in public areas such as coffee shops and parks.

So always ask questions before you attend any group to see if its right for you.



## What are some Questions to ask about a group?

- How many people attend the group?
- What happens at the meetings?
- Who attends, people with any type or stage of cancer? carers?
- Is the meeting place private?
- Who facilitates the group? Are they trained?



## Where can I find out more?

If you are interested in setting up a Cancer Support Group we can provide information, training and support to help you start and maintain an effective Cancer Support Group.



**For more information or to be put in contact with a Cancer Support Group facilitator, simply call Cancer Council on 13 11 20, or visit [www.cancerwa.asn.au](http://www.cancerwa.asn.au)**

*"Our group is very professionally run. It has information, humour and interest. I never see a boring look or yawn. Most importantly, it has bonding. I always leave with the feeling I belong to a solid group."*

For support and information on cancer and cancer-related issues, call Cancer Council on 13 11 20. Calls are confidential and available statewide Monday to Friday during business hours for the cost of a local call.



## Cancer Support Groups



Information and support

Sharing information and experiences

13 11 20  
[www.cancerwa.asn.au](http://www.cancerwa.asn.au)

# Cancer Support Groups



## What is a Cancer Support Group?

Cancer Support Groups bring people together who have been affected by cancer, this may include carers and family members.

Joining a local Cancer Support Group can provide you with the opportunity to meet and talk to others who share or understand your experience of cancer and discuss ways of coping with the challenges of life after a cancer diagnosis.

Cancer Council Western Australia Cancer Support Groups have trained facilitators that can help people affected by cancer by providing an opportunity to:

- find out up-to-date information about cancer and cancer treatments, often with guest speakers
- speak to others who understand what you are going through
- share fears or worries and ask questions in a safe and confidential environment
- reduce feelings of sadness, isolation or nervousness by connecting with others
- explore helpful ways of coping

A listing of all Cancer Council WA Cancer Support Groups and external Cancer Support Groups that come under the Cancer Council umbrella but are operated by other organisations can be found on the Cancer Council WA website [www.cancerwa.asn.au](http://www.cancerwa.asn.au).



## What types of Cancer Support Groups are available?

Depending upon your circumstances or needs there are various types of Cancer Support Groups that you may be able to access including:

- face-to-face groups
- internet or online groups
- telephone based groups

**Face-to-face groups** are generally held in your local community and may have up to 10 or 15 members who come together as a group in the same place at regular times.

**Internet or online groups** are provided in a “chat room” type experience and you will need a computer and internet connection. Cancer Council provides national online support groups which can be accessed via [onlinecommunity.cancercouncil.com.au](http://onlinecommunity.cancercouncil.com.au).

Private internet support groups on the site link you to others in similar situations via private blogs, forums and regular professionally facilitated live chat sessions. Those interested in joining will have an initial chat with a group facilitator to learn how the groups work, and whether an online group might be a good fit.

**Telephone based groups** use conference call technology to connect a number of people on the phone at the same time to a support group facilitator. If you, your family or friends find it difficult to travel to a Cancer Support Group meeting, or have more specific needs related to your cancer diagnosis or stage, you can share

your thoughts and experiences with others through a phone support group. Cancer Council telephone support groups are free and available throughout Australia.



## Cancer type specific or general Cancer Support Group?

Some Cancer Support Groups provide support for a variety of cancers and some for only one type of cancer, however, not all cancer types will have a specific Cancer Support Group in your area. It is important to note that many cancer experiences have similar challenges despite the actual type of cancer so an open group may still provide you with great support.



## How often should I attend?

There are groups that meet for a set number of occasions or for a set purpose, some groups meet all year round. Most groups meet for two hours, once a month.

Cancer Council WA Cancer Support Groups have trained facilitators that check-in with you every now and again to see if the group is still meeting your needs. Over time you may feel you are coping better with your cancer and don't feel the need to go as often, or at all, this is very normal.

*“My Cancer Support Group supports me in my local community and reassures me that I'm not facing cancer alone. I can talk to the group about things I couldn't share with my family.”*